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BULLETIN
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OF CALIFORNIA.

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This issue of the Bulletin was mailed May 15.
EDITORIAL NOTES.

**Bird
Protection
Versus
Sentiment.**

Apropos the wave of bird protection which has been sweeping through all ornithological journals of late, it is well to pause and analyze the motives of the several writers before wholly accepting their pleas, bowing our heads to grief and lamenting the wickedness of collectors at large. The person who has not trod the field from dawn till twilight, who knows nothing of the denizens of the woods and tree-tops, and who has never listened to the seabirds' cries above the boom of old ocean, cannot preach the doctrine of bird protection understandingly. Those who have delved into and grasped many of the delightful secrets which ornithology holds, and who are now urging a proper course in protective work, are worthy the thanks of every true ornithologist. Who can doubt the effectiveness of the work of Mr. Mackay in protecting the Terns on certain islands along the Atlantic seaboard, thus preserving a natural beauty? But those who are joining the wild rush simply to be an Audubonian,—to cry "bird protection" and then listen for the applause—all the while condemning legitimate science, are of vastly a different stamp.

The protectionist who would prevent the

slaughter of a single bird is as rampant as the collector who thinks he would be justified in shooting every winged creature of the air. Many excellent pleas have appeared in various journals of late, the writers of which doubtless speak from the heart and wish to eradicate evils,—such as the "egg collecting scourge" as it has been termed—which have some foundation in fact. These writers have studied nature at her best and the birds have no better protector than the ornithologist himself if he be one of conscience, for the collecting of a *proper* number of birds does not imply brutality. But when some ambitious extremist sits himself down to rend apart the current magazines and even reference works, and makes careful note of every mention of a bird slain or a nest taken (over-looking, of course, the observations and spirit of the article in his zeal) and then within his narrow mind evolves a whining article of "bird protection," he has doubtless gratified his ambition and with folded hands and a sort of rapturous serenity may take his seat beside the faithful! His mission has been filled and the birds may hope for oblivion to swallow him up in so far as he will ever protect them. Such maudlin sentiment is hardly worth condemning and those who are really protecting the birds may well regret such additions to their ranks.

Real protection will be accomplished by the live ornithologists who have a practical mission to perform in this respect, but they may well hesitate to take hold of the work if its effectiveness is to be hindered and made nauseating by the misdirected energy of such persons as we have pointed out. That there are many skins collected today which the demands of science do not warrant, everyone knows. A remedy is needed, which, if it does not materially increase the birds, will at least leave many unslaughtered that annually pay the penalty to the over-zealous collector. Those who accumulate vast series of eggs will have to plead hard for justification, although the egg evil is not so wide-spreading as some have claimed. It is well known that almost every bird will lay a second time when robbed and rear a brood as successfully as if the first nest had been undisturbed.

The two really great evils are the collecting of birds in large numbers during the breeding season, when many young in the nest are sacrificed, and the unlimited collecting of skins for mercenary purposes. We cannot condone either offense, which rarely can justify itself, and the evil as it exists in California will shortly be aired in the BULLETIN. Let us have bird protection in a practical way, without all the sentiment which does more than anything else to disgust the majority of well-meaning ornithologists.—C. B.

We are pleased to note that Mr. Robert Baird McLain of Wheeling, W. Va., who became a member of the Cooper Ornithological Club during his attendance at Stanford University, is actively pursuing his work in Herpetology since his departure from the coast. He has recently published three papers under the heading "Contributions to North Ameri-

can Herpetology." One, "Contributions to Neotropical Herpetology" gives a list of neotropical reptiles in the Stanford University Zoological Collection from Mexico, Panama, Colombia and Salvador. The second paper "Critical Notes on a Collection of Reptiles from the Western Coast of the United States" promises to form the basis of a corrected list which will be a guide for future students along this line, while the third paper is entitled "Notes on a Collection of Reptiles Made at Fort Smith, Ark." All the papers bear the imprint of careful work by the author, although the typography leaves much to be desired, but Mr. McLain may well congratulate himself upon putting forth such personal effort.

Bird-Lore for April comes promptly and, if anything, exceeds the initial number in contents and point of illustration. Typographically, as heretofore, it is without a flaw and will undoubtedly set the pace for ornithological journals in this respect for all time. The illustrations are such as every user of the camera and indeed every ornithologist may delight in. The frontispiece showing a Least Bittern on its nest and two half-tones of a Killdeer and nest, photographed from life, are notable examples of the possibilities of the camera in the field. The leading articles which treat chiefly of avian photography will benefit ornithologists who have photographic field work in view. The other articles are of a popular style, probably calculated to inspire in the "young idea" a proper reverence for the birds, all of which we hope may be effective, though we fear the inherent taste of the youth to "go gunning" cannot be so easily eradicated. Stress is laid upon the published accounts of certain eggng trips, which are condemned, and we fear that sometimes any real merit or good intentions which the "condemned" may have possessed or shown in his article, are lost sight of.

The ninth supplement to the A. O. U. Check List, printed in the *Auk* for January, contains several new races of birds which have been accepted by the Committee on Classification and added to the check list, and which will interest Californians. Among them are *Oceanodroma kaedingi* ANTHONY, Kaeding's Petrel, "Socorro and Clarion Islands north to Southern California"; *Pinicola enucleator californica* PRICE, Californian Pine Grosbeak, "Higher parts of the Sierra Nevada, Central California"; *Carpodacus mcgregori* ANTHONY, McGregor's House Finch, "San Benito Id., Lower Cal."; *Astragalinus tristis salicamans* (GRINNELL) "Pacific Coast region from Washington to Southern California"; *Pipilo maculatus clemente* (GRINNELL) "San Clemente Island, California"; *Harporhynchus redivivus pasadenensis* GRINNELL, Pasadena Thrasher, "Southern California"; *Harporhynchus lecontei arenicola* ANTHONY, Desert Thrasher, "Lower California."

Through the kindness and generosity of Mr. Lyman Belding, one of its honorary members, the Club has come into possession of a valuable MS. work, which, although unpublished,

forms a companion part to Mr. Belding's well-known *Land Birds of the Pacific District*, dealing with the water birds of the same territory in a most comprehensive way. The bound volume consists of 246 type-written pages with an autographic preface by Mr. Belding, who states it was practically completed in 1886. He says: "The reversing of the Check List of the A. O. U. whereby the water birds came first in the list, instead of last as formerly, found me unprepared to give the time to the water birds that I needed, and supposing that the water birds would soon be needed for publication, I made a hurried compilation, finishing it in five or six weeks and this is the result." These notes, which form probably the most complete and valuable list of the water birds of the Pacific Coast yet undertaken, are largely compilations from different publications, and necessary interlineations have been made up to 1897.

The BULLETIN presents with pleasure in this issue a sketch by Miss Charlotte Bray of Santa Clara, drawn from a description. Miss Bray possesses genius as an artist and we hope to present other of her bird delineations in future issues.



Band-tailed Pigeon Nesting in Santa Clara County, Cal.

During the last four years I have found two nests of the Band-tailed Pigeon, both in Santa Clara county and within ten miles of San Jose. The nests were both found in oak trees in a comparative oak forest. The first was found April 19, 1895 and was built on a horizontal limb of a white-oak tree twenty-five feet from the ground and contained one squab about a week old. The parent was flushed from the nest and well seen. The second nest was found March 11, 1898 and was built near the end of a horizontal live-oak limb thirty feet from the ground and was just completed. Both nests were compact structures, composed of an outer layer of twigs, filled in with pine needles and lined with fine grass. There are no pine trees in the vicinity, and the birds must have carried the needles from a distance. The pigeons used to be very common in the winter time in this vicinity, but are quite scarce now because of the timber being cut down.

WM. L. ATKINSON, Santa Clara, Cal.

(Although the Wild Pigeon has never been recorded as nesting in the valleys of California, there seems to be no doubt of the above record being true. The locality in which they were found is heavily wooded with live and white oak timber, and has been a favorite feeding ground for this species for years, so it seems not improbable that a few stray pairs remained to breed.—ED.)